41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

he teach me how to paddle a boat. After he died, I took it up myself. I did the same thing: go in the river and catch some fish and sell it. Most of is mullet fish, mullet and spots, and some catfish, all different kinds. Cast net. Run from three to four feet deep to maybe sometimes seven to eight feet deep. I go by myself or with my brother.

I began to do some carpenter work too. I was working along with a carpenter, and after a time I began to learn how to do some of the work for myself. So I finally try alone, and I made it all right. I do my own work now. I'm working at a block and pipe company--making door lintels and window lintels, all different kinds of stone.

The best kind of money people can make is on electricity works and chanical works and maybe expert carpenters and bricklayers. Harvesting season in the fall, you can't make much because it's only about three or four weeks long. You can do all right for those three or four weeks. You can make it anyhow. But 'round May and June, that's about the best months of the year on the farm. October you start having maybe some string beans. Then you sit 'til next year in May and June.

Mr. Benjamin Bligen

MORE LIGHT IS SHINING

I am forty. The look of the pudding is not the taste all the time. I have two children. I have a better time raising mine than my parents had raising us. Foods went up a lot, but still you can make it a little better now than you is in past time.

More light is shining. Can see more. Likewise you can do more and think more, 'cause I believe that more light is shining now than was shining in the past. And so help me God, I so glad that I can see some light. And I know there's more light for me. There is a bright light somewhere and I'm going to find it.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves--always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to discover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block--all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Incachee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinetmakers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21.) Both made a number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure enough to eat, and greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the

A. [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113. Analyst]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

ber of tradesmen on a plantation depended upon the size of the slaveholding and the plantation economy of the owner, every planter on St. Helena Island who owned as many as thirty slaves had at least one tradesman, usually a carpenter. Sometimes the planter had a head carpenter and several subordinates. The Trescot house on Barnwell Island near St. Helena, which had just been completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, was built entirely by Trescot's own carpenters, such work as window sashes and panellings being done in Charleston.[14]

The carpenter did the building and repair work of the plantation, and when work was slack at home he was usually hired out to neighboring plantations or to some reliable person in Beaufort or Charleston. For instance, in August, 1841, Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, paid $69.50 "to Mrs. Oswald's York for carpenter work."[15] In 1851 H. M. Stuart, of Beaufort, paid Joe $19 for plastering a room and $1.50 for mending a chimney.[16] Thus, some of the plantation tradesmen exercised as many liberties as free Negroes, and they commanded a position of respect among their fellow slaves. Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary to St. Helena during the Civil War, found Will, a cabinet-maker on one of the Capers plantations, "very discontented because he was ordered to the field, there being no work at his own trade to do." He was able to read and was "very intelligent and self-respecting."[17] Sir Charles Lyell, who visited James Ham-

[14] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 145. Congressman William Elliott took this house down in 1876, floated it to the town of Beaufort, and erected it just as it had been on Barnwell Island. The house is now owned and occupied by Dr. M. C. Elliott.

[15] Elliott Account Book. [16] Stuart Receipt Book.

[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.